

Thank you for your interest in agriculture in the State of West Virginia. The book you now hold in your hands is the definitive statistical tool relating to agriculture in the Mountain State.

It is important that the citizens of West Virginia have an appreciation for the role agriculture plays in our state's economic and social arenas. After all, without the farms of this state and nation, there would be no food for our tables.

The ownership of West Virginia's farms – 95 percent are family-owned – runs counter to national trends. That fact helps to strengthen our state's economy and helps to preserve an enviable way of life. It's also interesting to note that 27 percent of all farm operators in West Virginia are women.

These farms provide the raw materials that become the products found on grocery shelves throughout this nation. They also fuel a growing agribusinesses sector in this state that adds value to agricultural raw materials and keeps West Virginia dollars in West Virginia. However, the amount of land in farms continues to fall - here and throughout the country. All the while, our foreign competitors are putting more land into farm production and are working hard to overtake this nation as the world's breadbasket.

I hope you find this booklet useful, informative and thought-provoking. It is a testament to the ongoing work of West Virginia's farmers, as well as the work of the West Virginia Agriculture Statistics (WVAS), State Director Dale R. King and Deputy Director Radley Edwards.

Sincerely,



Gus R. Douglass  
Commissioner of Agriculture



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**Commissioner of Agriculture**